DEWAN'S REPLY : Mr. Raman Tampi, the question of throwing open forest lands in the Cardamom Hills area, with certain restrictions, is under the consideration of the Government and the Land Revenue Commissioner has been asked to draft rules. Of course, it will not apply to all forest lands. The Government themselves are anxious to throw open some lands for this purpose.

In regard to the Cutcherry compound area at Devicolam, as you know, that land was specially reserved for buildings for Government offices. A plot of 10 acres has been leased out for house-sites in blocks of 40 cents. But I am afraid it will not be possible to give up these lands otherwise than on leasehold tenure.

The Assembly adjourned for lunch at 1-30 P. M. and met again at 2-15 P. M.

11. Registry of Puduval lands in the Peermade taluk.

MR. O. P. ANANTANARAYANA AIYAR (*Member, Peermade taluk*) spoke about the difficulties experienced by the poor people in getting lands registered in the Peermade taluk. Poor people from other parts of the country applied for registry of lands and settled on them in the hope of getting them registered. The lands were also surveyed at their cost. But after survey the lands were sold in auction under the rules. The poor could not compete with the rich in an auction sale, with the result the latter always got the lands applied for and improved by the former who went without them. Not only that, they were sometimes convicted under the Land Conservancy Regulation. To remedy this evil, the member suggested that, when a piece of land was found to be available for registry, the Tahsildar should fix a suitable price for the land ; and only if the applicant agreed to accept the land for that price, should he be asked to deposit the probable cost of surveying the lands. The *taravila* fixed should be recovered at the time of issue of *patta*. Such a procedure would attract settlers from other parts of Travancore. There would not then be the scarcity of labour now felt by the Public Works Department and the estate owners. Peermade would also develop into a large town and the necessity to continue the grant of hill allowance to Government officers would cease.

The member next urged the need for registering lands lying on both sides of the Kottayam-Kumili Road, between the 43rd and the 70th miles. About twenty years ago, the tract between Kumili and Kanjirapalli was a dense forest. Subsequent to the Settlement of 1083, the lands between Kanjirapalli and the 35th mile on the Kottayam-Kumili road were assigned and those portions had been opened up. The area between the 35th and 43rd milestones, belonging to the Vanjipuzha Chief, had also been assigned and people had begun to settle there. With the growth of human habitations, the wild animals in the locality were forced to retire into uninhabited places beyond the 43rd mile. The lands there were thus subject to the ravages of wild animals. Cattle very often formed the prey of the wild animals and wild elephants roamed at large. It was therefore necessary to register the lands on both sides of the road, beginning from the 43rd mile in small blocks.

The next point of the member's representation was the re-assignment of cardamom lands bought in for Government at auction sales conducted under the Revenue Recovery Regulation. The Revenue authorities had recommended the sale of the lands in auction. The member could not understand how the lands, which once failed to fetch a price equivalent to the tax at Bh. Rs. 2 an acre could fetch more than Rs. 25 per acre. The rules did not permit auction sales, and consequently, applications for registry of such lands from 1100 onwards were pending. The Government were thus losing the tax for three years which they could have realised by assignment without auction. The lands should therefore be registered in the names of *bona fide* applicants *without* auction.

Lastly, he deprecated the practice of auctioning a piece of land for arrears of tax, at a place away from the locality of the land. The practice prevented intending purchasers from bidding at the time of auction. He, therefore, suggested that it should be stopped and requested the Government to insist that such sales should be conducted either at the spot or at the Taluk headquarters.

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DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Anantanarayana Aiyar, the reason why the lands have to be auctioned is that there is such a rush of applications for land that it is impossible to decide between the various applicants. In such a case the only way open to the Government is to auction the land and allow the highest bidder, if the bid is satisfactory, to get the land. Rules are, however, now being framed to deal with such cases. I hope that the matter will then be worked more smoothly.

In regard to the talk of poor persons having the first choice to the land, experience has been that when people without any sort of means take to cardamom cultivation, and for some reason or other, their cardamom plantations do not pay, rather than pay the tax, they allow the land to be auctioned and go away. That happens in many cases.

MEMBER: In the case of *puduval* lands ?

DEWAN : The same thing holds good in the case of *puduval* lands as well. In regard to the manner of disposal of lands, new rules are being framed. Auction on the spot is not always possible in the High Ranges and Peermade because sometimes in these wild and desolate places there is nobody at all on the spot to bid and so the auction has to be carried on elsewhere where there are people to bid.

12. Difficulties experienced by the Cheramars in obtaining registry of Puduval lands.

MR. PARADI ABRAHAM ISAAC (*Member, Nominated*) said that the difficulties experienced by the depressed classes in getting *poramboke* and *puduval* lands registered had not ceased to exist, in spite of the facilities afforded by the Government in the matter. The rule regarding the assignment of 3 acres of land under concessional terms to every family of the depressed classes failed to have the desired effect, mainly because the lands earmarked for such assignment were quite unfit either for human habitation or cultivation. All good lands were in the possession of others. The unsympathetic attitude of the subordinates of the Revenue Department was another reason for the rules not having the desired effect. He therefore suggested the following remedies :—

(1) The Protector of the Depressed Classes should be invested with the powers of a Division Peishkar for sanctioning concessional registry of lands.

(2) A full-time officer should be appointed as the Protector of the Depressed Classes.

(3) Four officers, invested with the powers of a Tahsildar in the matter of registry of lands, should be appointed under the Protector of the Depressed Classes to work for a period of ten years, one in each of the four Revenue Divisions of the State.

(4) The lands already earmarked in the taluks of South Travancore were barren and useless for cultivation and those in the Kuttanad tracts submerged under water. A committee consisting of the Protector of the Depressed Classes and five gentlemen among the Cheramars *viz.*, Messrs. P. A. Isaac, A. J. John, A. T. Asirvadam, P. J. Joseph and N. J. Joshua, should be appointed to select more useful lands and the expenses connected with the committee should be borne by the Government.

The member prayed also that the entire area of lands already selected by the various disafforestation committees should be registered in the names of the Cheramars alone on recovery of the *taravila* due in ten annual instalments in view of the fact that they formed the real cultivating class. Besides such lands, he considered that the following reserved forests and lands included in such forests should also be disafforested and assigned to them :—

(i) The Valiakavu Reserve, comprised in Survey Nos. 49/1 and 35/1 of the Ranni *pakuthi*, Pattanamtitta taluk.

(ii) The land comprised in Survey No. 5191/1 of the Pattanapuram *pakuthi*, Pattanapuram taluk.

(iii) The Kalaketti Reserve in the Minachil taluk.

(iv) The *Kuvakkavu* and other blocks included in the Manimala Range.

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